

Symposium Reception (Old Chapel) 5:30pm – 6:30pm Dinner and Keynote to follow

Keynote Address

Congressman Paul Tonko – Mighty Waters Initiative

Honorable Congressman Tonko will present the Might Waters Initiative as our Keynote Address at the third annual Mohawk Watershed Symposium.

Congressman Paul D. Tonko is serving his second term in Congress representing the 21st District of New York, which includes the state's capital city, Albany. Paul comes to Washington, DC with over two decades of administrative, legislative and policy experience having served in the New York State Assembly from 1983 to 2007, and as President and CEO of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) from 2007-2008.

Congressman Tonko has been a strong voice for responsible energy policy, job growth in Upstate New York, unionized labor and affordable and accessible healthcare for all. In Congress, he is a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor and serves on the subcommittees for Higher Education and Healthy Families and Communities. Building on his work in the New York State Assembly, where he fought for one of the nation's strongest mental health parity laws (known as "Timothy's Law"), Paul has always promoted fair and equitable healthcare policies that strengthen our communities and protect our most vulnerable citizens.

Congressman Tonko is also a member of the Committee on Science and Technology, which merges his energy expertise with his environmental agenda. Serving on subcommittees for Energy and Environment, Research and Science Education and Technology and Innovation, Paul hopes to spur an environment where innovation and cutting-edge research and design spur economic development in the 21st Congressional District.

An advocate for a “green economy” and “green-collar jobs”, Congressman Tonko has promoted wind development in Upstate New York and successfully lobbied GE to locate their growing GE Wind operations in Schenectady, NY. In the New York State Assembly, Paul was a lead sponsor of the Power for Jobs program, which provides low cost power to employers throughout New York State and has retained or created 300,000 jobs statewide. In 2006, Paul successfully negotiated for Beech-Nut to keep their plant in Montgomery County, and expand their operation by relocating their corporate headquarters. The new Beech-Nut headquarters will be a green building and retain 356 jobs while creating 135 new positions.

Congressman Tonko also has strong ties to local government, which he sees as a crucial partner in delivering programs and services to constituents. At age 26, Paul was the youngest person in the history of Montgomery County to be elected to the county’s Board of Supervisors. He served as chairman of that body until 1981. Prior to his election to the Assembly in 1983, Paul was an engineer in the New York State Department of Transportation and also served on the staff of the Department of Public Service. Paul has been a longtime member of the Public Employees Federation (PEF) and proudly serves as the first PEF member elected to Congress.

Paul graduated from Clarkson University with a degree in mechanical and industrial engineering. He is a lifelong resident of the city of Amsterdam, New York.



Congressman Tonko's Mighty Waters Initiative:

In July of 2010, Congressman Tonko hosted what was then known as the *Mighty Waters Conference* at Schenectady County Community College. The original conference focused on promoting sustainable and responsible waterfront development projects as a means to improve the quality of life in communities along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and Erie Canal.

The interest generated from this initial meeting sparked the creation of a task force to submit further recommendations to Congressman Tonko about how he can use his office to: assure that federal agencies and resources are used more effectively to benefit the region, attract additional federal resources where necessary, and galvanize local and regional interest in waterway related projects and policies.

During a convening meeting in September of 2010, the *Mighty Waters Task Force* adopted the below mission statement and broke into six separate subcommittees to complete a series of goals and objectives. By early December of 2010, final committee reports were submitted and condensed into a series of findings and recommendations for further action.

The Congressman and his task force are currently conducting a listening tour to solicit feedback and further recommendations from constituencies and stakeholders beyond the makeup of the original task force. It is our hope to maintain an open and substantive dialogue among all partners as we strive to promote, protect and enhance the myriad of communities tied to our region's waterways.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Mighty Waters Task Force is to help create a climate of investment, recovery and public awareness for the waterways and communities of the upper Hudson and Mohawk Rivers, Erie Canal and related waterways by mobilizing federal resources that encourage policy reform, economic development, public access and enjoyment and effective environmental and cultural resource management.

Please direct all comments and recommendations to Sean Shortell or Dylan Carey in my Albany office at 518-465-0700 or mighty.waters@mail.house.gov

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul Tonko'.